

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 7-10, 15 and 27-29 are pending in this application. Claim 15 has been withdrawn by the Examiner, but should be rejoined when claim 1, the claim from which claim 15 depends, is allowed. By this Amendment, claims 1, 7 and 8 are amended to even further distinguish over the applied references, claim 3 is amended to correct a minor informality, claims 4 and 26 have been canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited therein, and claim 29 is added. Claims 7 and 8 also are amended to depend from claim 1. Support for the amendments to claim 1 can be found, for example, in Fig. 14 (see step S 302) and on page 28, line 7 through page 29, line 5 of the specification. Support for the amendments to claims 7 and 8 and for added claim 29 can be found, for example, in Fig. 18 and on page 32, lines 2-11 of the specification. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants note that Reference 1 (CN 1279793 A) of the April 26, 2007 Information Disclosure Statement has not been considered. Reference 1 corresponds to English language Reference 2 (WO 99/14695) of the same Information Disclosure Statement. Therefore, the Examiner is requested to consider Reference 1 and provide Applicants' undersigned representatives with a fully initialed Form PTO 1449.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 4, 7-10, 26 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Berstis et al. (Berstis), EP 1 028 386 A2, in view of Chefalas et al. (Chefalas), U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0138786 A1; and rejects claims 1, 2, 4, 7-10, 26 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Berstis, in view of Chefalas, and further in view of Forlai, U.S. Patent No. 7,243,082. The rejections of canceled claims 4 and 26 are moot. The rejections of claims 1, 2, 7-10 and 28 are respectfully traversed.

The combination of Berstis, Chefalas and Forlai does not disclose, and would not have rendered obvious, a customer registration method comprising the steps of storing the received customer information onto a storage device and performing a customer registration as a purchaser of the merchandise, judging whether or not the customer has already performed a membership registration that is different from the customer registration and can be performed even by a member who does not purchase merchandise, and transmitting information advising to perform the membership registration to the customer who has not performed the membership registration yet, successively after completing the customer registration, as recited in independent claim 1.

Berstis teaches that a consumer can register a product by entering registration information such as a UPC or part number into a browser (see Fig. 2 and paragraph [0018]). The registration information is sent in step 206 to a product information server 106 that registers the consumer (see Fig. 2 and paragraph [0019]). In step 208 the product information server 106 registers the consumer's warranty (allegedly corresponding to the claimed membership registration) by sending warranty registration information to the consumer (see Fig. 2 and paragraph [0020]). In Fig. 2 there is no step between step 206 and step 208. That is, in Berstis, the product information server 106 registers the consumer's warranty automatically, without judging whether or not the consumer has already performed a warranty registration. Further, Berstis does not disclose any step that can reasonably be considered to correspond to advising the consumer to register a warranty because the warranty is automatically registered. Moreover, Chefalas and Forlai fail to overcome the deficiencies of Berstis. Specifically, Chefalas is only cited for allegedly teaching online warranty services and Forlai is only cited for allegedly teaching registration of potential buyers. Therefore, the combination of Berstis, Chefalas and Forlai does not disclose, and would not have rendered obvious, a customer registration method comprising the steps of storing a received customer

information onto a storage device and performing a customer registration as a purchaser of the merchandise, judging whether or not the customer has already performed a membership registration that is different from the customer registration and can be performed even by a member who does not purchase merchandise, and transmitting information advising to perform the membership registration to the customer who has not performed the membership registration yet, successively after completing the customer registration, as recited in independent claim 1. Therefore, independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2, 7-10 and 28 are patentable over the applied references. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

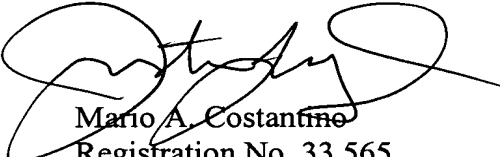
The Office Action rejects claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Berstis in view of Chefalas, and further in view of Keen et al. (Keen), U.S. Patent No. 5,774,882; rejects claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Berstis in view of Chefalas, further in view of Forlai, and further in view of Keen; rejects claim 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Berstis in view of Chefalas, and further in view of Fisher et al. (Fisher), U.S. Patent No. 6,771,801 B1; and rejects claim 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Berstis in view of Chefalas, further in view of Forlai, and further in view of Fisher. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Because claims 3 and 27 incorporate the features of independent claim 1, and because Keen and Fisher fail to overcome the deficiencies of Berstis, Chefalas and Forlai, these claims also are patentable over the applied references for at least these reasons, as well as for the additional features that these claims recite. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: April 25, 2008

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